



# FIDUCIAN FOCUS

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## Welcome to 2026

I hope you all managed to have an enjoyable festive season and to spend some time with family and friends, as it is usually a very busy time of the year for all. As we move out of 2025 and onto another year, it's worth taking a moment to reflect on the resilience and adaptability that continue to shape financial markets and investor behaviour. Despite ongoing shifts in economic conditions—ranging from interest rate movements to evolving global growth expectations—opportunities remain for disciplined, long term investors.

At Fiducian, our focus remains unchanged: applying a consistent investment process, diversifying across high quality managers, and maintaining a long term perspective that avoids the noise of short term market sentiment. History repeatedly shows that patience, prudent asset allocation, and an eye on long range objectives are the foundations of financial wellbeing.

Here in Financial Planning we are continuing to grow, with new offices coming on board in Queensland and New South Wales as well as building up our new Mulgrave office in Victoria. We are delighted to welcome Louis Randles back into the Mulgrave

office, after transferring from our Sydney office. We are working to develop security systems to keep your information safe and protected, this is an on-going matter and one we take seriously.

For many clients, this period is also a timely reminder to review personal goals, ensure portfolios remain aligned with risk tolerance, and take advantage of strategic opportunities that arise during market transitions. Whether you're planning for retirement, growing your wealth, or protecting your financial future, our team is here to support you with informed advice and proven investment solutions. Please take the time to meet with your adviser and undertake your annual review, it is extremely important.

Thank you for your ongoing trust and partnership.



### **Robby Southall**

Executive Chairman  
Fiducian Financial Services



# NEW YEAR, NEW BUDGET: RESETTING YOUR FINANCES AFTER THE SILLY SEASON

The festive season is a time for celebration, family, and—let's be honest—spending. Between gifts, travel, food, and holiday events, it's common for budgets to blow out in December. But the beginning of the year offers the perfect clean slate to take control again and set yourself up for a financially confident year.

## Why a Post-Christmas Reset Matters

Even the most disciplined spenders can get caught in the holiday hype. Many find themselves starting the year with a lighter bank balance, credit card bills, or a sense of financial overwhelm. A budget reset helps you:

- Re-establish healthy spending habits
- Take stock of your financial position
- Set achievable goals for the year
- Avoid lingering post-holiday debt

## Steps to Reset Your Budget

### 1. Review Your Holiday Spending

Take a clear look at what you spent during the festive season. Compare it to your planned holiday budget (if you had one) and highlight areas where costs blew out. This honest review

helps you improve next year's plan and understand where post-holiday adjustments are needed.

### 2. Check Your Outstanding Debts

If you used credit cards, Buy Now Pay Later (BNPL) platforms like Afterpay, or personal loans, list:

- Balances
- Due dates
- Interest rates

Prioritise repayments to avoid accumulating unnecessary interest or fees.

### 3. Re-establish Your Baseline Budget

Return to (or create) your monthly budget.

Include:

- Regular bills
- Rent or mortgage
- Groceries
- Transport
- Savings contributions

If your holiday spending reduced your January cash flow, consider tightening non-essential categories until you catch up.

#### 4. Create a New Savings Goal

Kick off the year by deciding on a few achievable financial goals. Examples:

- Building a \$1,000 emergency buffer
- Saving for a mid-year holiday
- Eliminating credit card debt
- Increasing super contributions

Set clear targets and timeframes to stay motivated.

#### 5. Automate Your Money

Automation removes the mental load and helps you stay consistent.

- Schedule savings transfers
- Set up automated bill payments

Use category-based account splitting (popular with Australian banks like ING, UP, and Commbank)

### Key Things for Australians to Consider

#### 1. Back-to-School Costs

If you have children in your care, January and February brings significant expenses—uniforms, stationery, technology, and fees. Plan ahead so these don't catch you off guard.

#### 2. Summer Energy Bills

Hot weather means higher electricity usage from air conditioning and fans. Factor in larger than usual utility bills.

#### 3. Upcoming Public Holidays

Australia Day and early-year long weekends can tempt extra spending. If you're planning outings or road trips, budget for them.

#### 4. Interest Rate Movements

Stay aware of RBA updates and any changes to home loan repayments, especially if you're on a variable rate.

#### 5. Insurance Renewals

Many Australians have insurance renewals early in the year (car, home, health). Review your coverage and compare providers to ensure you're getting value.

#### 6. Tax Planning

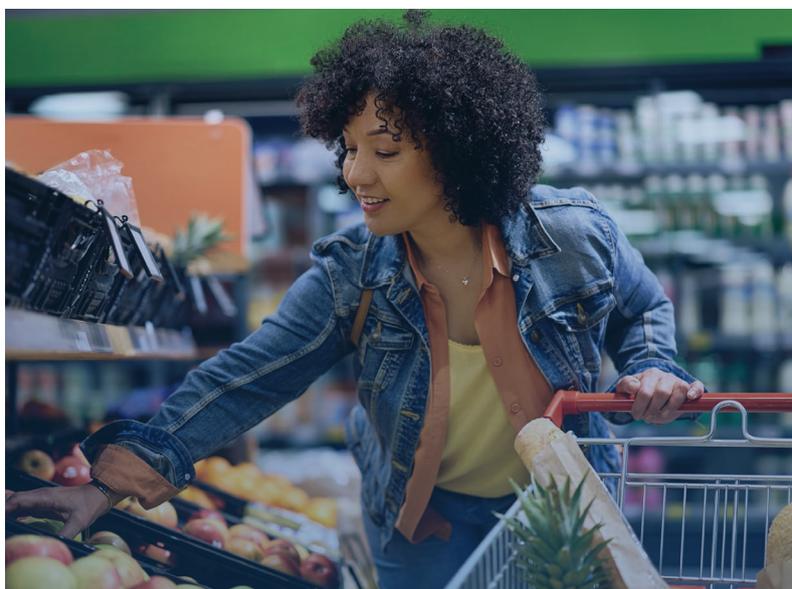
The end of financial year might feel far off, but early preparation helps:

- Keep receipts
- Track work-from-home hours if applicable
- Review deductions with your accountant

#### 7. Seasonal Grocery Prices

Fresh produce prices can fluctuate due to weather events, supply issues, and seasonality. Being flexible with meal planning helps manage costs.

A budget reset doesn't have to feel restrictive—think of it as a fresh start. With a little planning and awareness, you can recover from the Christmas rush, strengthen your financial habits, and step confidently into the new year.





# ARE YOU READY FOR RETIREMENT?

Retirement isn't just about reaching a certain age — it's about feeling ready for the next chapter of your life. True retirement confidence comes from knowing you've thought ahead, planned carefully, and made informed decisions about your financial future.

## 1. Define Your Retirement Vision

Before you start crunching numbers, take time to picture what your ideal retirement looks like.

Defining your vision is the foundation for every financial decision that follows. Ask yourself:

- What age would I like to retire?
- What does my dream lifestyle include? Travel, part-time work, volunteering or spending time with loved ones?
- Where do I want to live?

Clarity here helps set meaningful goals — and gives your financial strategy real purpose.

## 2. Understand Your Financial Position

Get an idea of where you are today. Review your savings, superannuation balances, investments, and debts, as well as your ongoing expenses.

It's also important to consider future costs such as healthcare, home maintenance, or potential aged care needs. Having a clear snapshot of your current position allows you to plan with confidence and avoid surprises later.

## 3. Calculate Your Retirement Needs

Once you know where you stand, the next step is to determine what you'll need to maintain your lifestyle in retirement.



According to the 2025 ASFA Retirement Standard, a *comfortable lifestyle* costs an estimated \$54,240 per year for singles and \$76,505 per year for couples aged 65–84 who own their own home. This figure is a useful benchmark and includes everyday expenses such as food, clothing, private health insurance, home maintenance, transport, and modest leisure activities, but your personal costs and other factors will depend on your lifestyle expectations and health needs.

Retirees today are living longer, healthier lives, which means your savings may need to last 25–30 years or more.

#### 4. Identify Your Sources of Income

Your retirement income may come from several sources — such as superannuation or pension accounts, investment earnings, rental properties, government benefits (like the Age Pension), or personal savings. Diversifying your income sources can help build financial stability and flexibility, especially during market fluctuations.

#### 5. Identify and Address Any Gaps

If your projected expenses exceed your estimated income, this is your opportunity to adjust. You might choose to increase your super contributions, review your investment strategy, or even delay retirement slightly to strengthen your savings base.

A professional financial adviser can help you identify practical strategies to close the gap — such as optimising superannuation contributions, improving tax efficiency, or restructuring assets for sustainable income.

#### 6. Protect Your Wealth

Safeguarding your assets is just as important as growing them. Make sure your insurance policies — including health, life, and income protection — are up to date.

Review your estate planning documents regularly to ensure your will, power of attorney, and beneficiary nominations reflect your current wishes. This helps protect your family's financial future and preserves the legacy you've built.

## 7. Seek Trusted Professional Advice

Financial advice is about more than money — it's about clarity, confidence, and peace of mind.

According to the Financial Advice Association Australia's 2025 Value of Advice Consumer Research, Australians who receive professional financial advice report *higher levels of financial wellbeing, confidence, and overall life satisfaction* than those who do not.

## 8. Review Regularly

Retirement isn't static — your financial plan shouldn't be either. Review your strategy regularly to reflect changes in markets, legislation, and your personal circumstances.

Set an annual reminder for a financial check-up and meet with your financial adviser to make any necessary adjustments. Small, consistent reviews can make a significant difference to your long-term outcomes.

By defining your goals, understanding your position, and seeking professional guidance, you'll move closer to the life you've imagined.

At Fiducian, we help our clients optimise their income and benefits in retirement, create clear and achievable plans, and enjoy the financial freedom they've earned. Together, we can help turn your vision into reality — so you can live your retirement with confidence, purpose, and peace of mind.



Sources: Association of Superannuation Funds of Australia (ASFA), *The ASFA Retirement Standard, 2025* <https://www.superannuation.asn.au/consumers/retirement-standard/>. Financial Advice Association Australia (FAAA), *2024 Value of Advice Consumer Research, 2025* <https://faaa.au/wp-content/uploads/2025/09/Value-of-Advice-2025.pdf>. ASIC, *The Great Retirement Race (speech), August 2025* <https://www.asic.gov.au/about-asic/news-centre/-speeches/the-great-retirement-race/#:~:text=Australians%20lack%20confidence%20for%20retirement>



## THE INVESTMENT OUTLOOK FOR 2026 AND WHY STAYING WITH YOUR INVESTMENT STRATEGY REMAINS THE BEST APPROACH

2025 was a volatile year for many share markets, with trade tensions that dominated the first few months leading to some heavy market falls. Over subsequent months, however, most major markets resumed the upwards trend that began in late 2023 and continued right through 2024. By the end of 2025, markets had almost all moved up strongly, including the broad US market (S&P500 index, up 18%), the technology-focused Nasdaq index (up 21%) and most European and Asian markets. The Australian market also rose strongly, rising 10%.

The outlook for the coming year will depend on many factors, although it is notable that most markets have shown little negative effect from geo-political tensions, including the ongoing wars in Ukraine and the Middle East. Instead, the main factor driving markets appears to have been an expectation that inflation in the major economies would continue to be brought under control and that, as a consequence, interest rates would continue to be lowered. This trend appears to be broadly still in place, although recent upticks in headline inflation in the US and, even more so in Australia, could dampen expectations of further rate reductions for the near-term.

With uncertainty about the outlook always present, as always, our advice to investors is to stay well diversified. We recommend that a core part of an overall portfolio be held in our diversified funds (the Fiducian Capital Stable, Balanced, Growth and Ultra Growth Funds). For investors who are happy to add to this core exposure, other asset sector and specialist funds that have greater risk can be used to capture further potential upside, as we continue to see good potential value in many equity sectors around the world. This is especially so as fundamentally we regard the global economy as being reasonably healthy with positive earnings forecasts in many jurisdictions and with further potential for interest rate cuts in many cases.

In conclusion, as we head into the new year, we encourage you to remain focused on your longer-term objectives. Staying with your established investment strategy remains the most reliable path to achieving your financial objectives.



Each year we celebrate the hard work and dedication of our financial advisers. We concluded our recent Annual Conference in Bali with a lavish event to announce the 2024/25 Adviser of the Year Awards.

Throughout the evening, attendees enjoyed world-class dining, cultural performances and heartfelt acceptance speeches that highlighted the passion behind the profession. The Adviser Awards Gala Dinner was more than a celebration of success—it was a reminder of the vital role advisers play in shaping brighter financial futures. Congratulations to all our award winners:

- ★ Financial Adviser of the Year, winner - Judy Hughes (Adelaide)
- ★ Financial Adviser of the Year, runner up - Anthony Amodeo (Geelong)
- ★ Financial Adviser of the Year, 2nd runner up - Ross Dwyer (Tuggerah)
- ★ Community Award - Marie Louise Muscat (Sydney CBD)
- ★ Compliance Award - Rosland Whitehead (Adelaide)
- ★ Dedication Award - Michelle Halvorsen (Bayside & Caboolture)
- ★ Best Franchise Practice - Bendigo



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